



Historic and Cultural Resources Working Group DRAFT Minutes

Date: Monday, March 18, 2019
Time: 8:30 – 10:10am
Location: Town Hall Annex, 1st floor conference room
Attendees: Pete Howard, JoAnn Robinson, Dianne Schaefer, Steve Makowka, Ann LeRoyer, Erin Zwirko, Ali Carter, Kelly Lynema, Kathy Broomer, Wendy Frontiero

Kathy and Wendy began the meeting by providing an overview of new additions to the final draft of the Survey Master Plan. Since the meeting on 2/14, they have updated the introduction, threats, and survey recommendations sections, added an action plan with phasing, and estimated the costs involved to survey the full list of areas and properties identified by the group in prior meetings. Additionally, they have worked with Adam Kurowski to create a GIS map identifying the locations of all proposed areas and properties.

Ali pointed out that the plan states that “area forms are given a high priority than individual property forms”, and asked why that is the case. Kathy and Wendy said that area forms provide a bigger picture in how individual buildings related to each other and the history of an entire area; instead of describing individual structures and repeating a neighborhood history in multiple forms, the area form is a more efficient way of documenting historical assets. The group then discussed whether area forms could be used to add large numbers of properties to Arlington’s local inventory, as Arlington’s demolition delay bylaw specifically calls out buildings, not area forms. Wendy said that officially, the AHC process for adding properties to the local inventory is not automatic. The AHC has to vote on whether to add individual properties to the local inventory. Wendy added that state-level area forms list buildings that are part of the area, but do not identify whether each of those buildings are considered contributing or non-contributing. It would be important to make that distinction as part of any scope of work for future inventory work.

Steve said that even if the AHC votes to add all the properties in an area form to the local inventory, this doesn’t mean that they would all result in a 12-month demolition delay. The AHC could still vote to determine that a specific property is non-contributing, in which case demolition delay would not be triggered. Kathy recommended against this practice, saying that the group and AHC should consider MHC forms as a study. At

some later time, of those areas and properties that have been identified, the AHC should determine which are significant before adding them to the local inventory.

Steve requested that the report be updated to make sure that it refers to streetscapes and neighborhoods; these should be defined as unique settings and such definitions would be helpful to identify the context.

The group then discussed minor clarifying revisions to be made to the Town Overview and Identification of Neighborhood Survey Units and Existing Inventory Documentation sections.

A larger discussion was had about the number of objects on record with documentation at the MHC – the Survey Master Plan states that only six have been documented – and whether the AHC feels there are more objects to be documented and how those should be added to the Survey Master Plan. It was decided that a brief discussion of objects should be added to the priorities and threats sections of the plan, and that a line item should be added to the action plan to recommend that a survey of historic objects be completed, even though the cost for such a plan cannot be estimated without knowing how many objects should be documented.

Additional minor clarifying revisions were discussed for the Existing National Register and Local Historic District Designations, Historic Themes and Periods of Development in Arlington, Overviews of Survey Units and Threats to Historic Resources sections.

The group then discussed the recommendation to not survey the high school. Steve felt that combining existing resources is an important component of making sure that the historical aspects of the high school are documented. JoAnn said that the AHC had a meeting with the high school Building Committee, and has since decided that they want to create a form B inventory form to document the high school. Ali asked if there was a discussion about adding the high school to the local inventory so as to subject it to demolition delay. JoAnn said that wasn't discussed at the meeting, and that the AHC has the option of creating a form, submitting it to MHC, but not adding the building to the demolition delay list. Pete expressed that he feels that documenting the high school with a form B is a mistake, explaining that the larger public does not necessarily understand the nuances of documentation and could use the AHC's decision as support for a minority position, which could then result in a loss of approval at town meeting. Kathy and Wendy said they are limited in what they can do in regard to the high school and the limited scope of the survey master plan; that it is clear that this is something the group needs to address, but the Survey Master Plan isn't the vehicle for that. Erin reminded the group that the mandate of the HCRWG is not related to the high school, but rather completion of the Survey Master Plan.

A discussion was had about the consultants' recommendation to make sure that all properties on the Arlington local inventory are represented with documentation at the state level. There are a number of instances where this is the case, and it should be cleaned up. Kathy further recommended that if there was going to be only one change

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to the Town's demolition delay bylaw, that the word "inventory" be removed from the bylaw. Including that word creates substantial confusion between MHC and local/AHC records.

Under the Survey Action Plan section, the group requested that Kathy and Wendy add in a footnote with clarifying language about how the estimates were created. The group also reviewed the map of areas and properties recommended for future survey. Ann requested that the Mill Brook be more visible on the map, as it is described extensively in the Survey Master Plan.

The group discussed next steps: members with additional comments or edits on the draft plan are to send them to Kelly by Wednesday evening so she can share consolidated feedback with the consultants. The final delivery of the plan is due by April 4, 2019.

On the minutes from the February 14, 2019 meeting, Kathy and Steve identified a few corrections. Steve made a motion to approve the minutes with requested amendments; Ann seconded. All those in attendance voted in favor of approval with the exception of Pete, who objected with regard to the discussion of the high school.

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